

## Important Information Regarding Your Nuclear Stress Test

A stress test helps your physician know how well your heart works during physical activity. As your body works harder during exercise it will require more oxygen and energy. In order to meet the demand, the heart muscle will beat faster and stronger. Your physician has ordered a nuclear stress test that combines the traditional stress test with nuclear imaging so that your coronary blood flow can be evaluated. The goal of the test is to see if your heart muscle receives sufficient blood flow via the coronary arteries.

### Why are Nuclear Stress Tests Commonly Ordered?

1. To determine whether the symptoms you are having are due to a blockage. Such symptoms could be but limited to chest pain, shortness of breath, fatigue, dizziness, palpitations, and or swelling of the lower extremities.
2. To recreate symptoms, provoke an EKG change or an abnormal rhythm.
3. To see if a person who is asymptomatic has silent heart disease due to coronary artery disease.
4. To determine the risk of future heart problems in patients with known coronary artery disease.
5. To evaluate the effectiveness of post surgical procedures, angioplasty, stenting, and or medical therapy.
6. Pre-operative clearance.

**Preparation for the Test: (Your test will take an average of 3-4 hours)**

**Important: If you are pregnant, or suspect that you are pregnant, or are breastfeeding; discuss this with your doctor before undergoing this procedure.**

- **Do not eat, drink or smoke for 4 hours before your test. You may have water to drink.**
- **Do not eat or drink caffeinated foods or beverages for 24 hours before your test. Caffeine can be found in coffee, tea, chocolate, soft drinks cold and certain migraine preparations. Note: Decaffeinated products also contain small amounts of caffeine and may NOT be consumed.**
- Wear comfortable walking shoes or sneakers and loose fitting clothing. It is helpful to wear a short sleeved shirt that buttons in the front. **Do not wear shirts or blouses with beads or metal studs and or zippers**, as it will interfere with the pictures.
- Do not apply lotions, oils or powders to the chest area.
- It is important to ask your Doctor
  - How to adjust your insulin and food intake prior to the test
  - If you should take your regular medication before the test
  - If you should take your heart medication before the test
- Always take your blood pressure medication
- Do not consume alcohol, take tranquilizers or sedatives for at least **4 hours** before the test
- You may bring a small snack and drink with you to eat after your stress test
- **Please be prompt, if you are late more than 15 minutes past your appointment time, your test will mostly likely have to be rescheduled for another time or date.**

**You are required to notify our office at least 24 hours in advance if you must cancel your appointment. If you fail to do so, you will be billed a \$100.0 cancellation fee for the cost of the isotope.**

### **What will happen To Me during the Test?**

The nuclear test allows your doctor to see pictures of your heart when your heart is at rest and following the stress test. To create those pictures you will receive 2 injections of a small amount of radioactive material. The level of radioactivity used is extremely small. An intravenous line (IV) will be placed in your arm before the first injection of the isotope, and the IV line will be used later during the stress test for the injection of the stress isotope. Following the first injection there will be an estimated wait of 45-60 minutes, then you will be under a gamma camera and pictures of your heart will be recorded. The camera does not produce any radiation. It will be placed close to your chest and pictures will be taken for approximately 15minutes. This portion of the test is called the “rest study”.

Following your rest study, our trained staff will place electrodes on your chest that will constantly monitor your heart during the test. Your blood pressure will also be monitored. During the stress test you are constantly monitored by a Physician, a physician’s assistant or a nurse practitioner. The actual stress test portion takes approximately 10 – 15 minutes, in addition to the preparation time. Before the end of the stress test, a second injection of the isotope will be administered. The radiopharmaceutical is taken up by your heart muscle and can be visualized by the gamma camera in the same manner as the rest study. The imaging portion of your “stress study” will take approximately 15 minutes.

### **What happens After the Test?**

When the test is over, you may eat or drink and return to your normal routine. You may resume your normal medications. The images will be reviewed by one of our Nuclear Cardiologists and results will be sent to your primary care Physician. You will be notified of the results within 1 week of the test.